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DE RUEHZP #1193 1932037
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 122037Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0815
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 2606
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 0701
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFSS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3-WHEM/J3-SOD/J5-WHEM//
RHMFSS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

UNCLAS PANAMA 001193

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN - TELLO & GREENE & FOR WHA/EPSC ALSO FOR
EB/TPP/BTA -LAMPRON
STATE PASS USTR -EISSENSTAT AND SHIGETOMI USDOC/MAC -
GAISFORD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ECON ETRD PM

SUBJECT: PANAMA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OVERWHELMINGLY RATIFIES
TPA

REF: PANAMA 01095

¶1. (U) Panama's National Assembly voted overwhelmingly to
ratify the U.S. - Panama TPA on July 11, 2007. Fifty eight

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members of the assembly voted in favor of the TPA, three
voted against it (Mireya Lasso, Miguel Fanovich, and Enrique
Garrido), one member (Wigberto Quintero) abstained, and nine
were not present. Those that voted against the TPA said
there was not enough time for representatives to read the
entire contents of the agreement and gain an understanding of
the impact of its implementation. Vice Minister of Trade
Carmen Gisela Vergara noted publicly that she clearly
explained all that transpired during the negotiations, the
gains that were made, and expectations concerning the various
sectors. Vice President Samuel Lewis Navarro said that the
next task will be to obtain ratification by the U.S. Congress
and work along side various sectors to implement the
agreement.

¶2. (U) The Assembly ratified the TPA minutes before
anti-TPA protesters showed up in front of the Assembly's
building. Led by the National Front for Economic and Social
Rights (Frenadeso), the protesters claimed that the TPA did
not represent the interest of the people and that the U.S.
would have disproportionately larger gains in regard to
tariff reductions than Panama as a result of the TPA.

COMMENT:

¶3. (U) This overwhelming vote for the TPA reflects the
broad political consensus in Panama for further trade
openings. It also reflects the GOP's concerted outreach
campaigns over the past six months to sell the TPA's merits.
As reported in reftel # 01095, the GOP also sought this quick
ratification to signal its seriousness to the U.S. congress.
END COMMENT

Eaton